

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 03254 031443Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 031330Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7465

S E C R E T PARIS 03254

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: MITTERRAND CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE US
SECURITY COMMITMENT

REF: (A) STATE 3805; (B) PARIS 1447; (C) PARIS 1867

1. IN FOLLOW-UP TO CONVERSATIONS REPORTED REFS B AND C, PS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY PONTILLON TOLD EMBOFFS ON BEHALF OF MITTERRAND ON STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS THAT LATTER WAS PRIVATELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT US MIGHT WITHDRAW ITS SECURITY COMMITMENT FROM FRANCE IF PS AND PC CAME TO POWER IN 1978. PONTILLON SAID POINT CAME UP OBLIQUELY IN MITTERRAND'S CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY IN WASHINGTON ON NOVEMBER 28. PONTILLON ALSO IMPLIED THAT OUR OWN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM (REFTELS) AS WELL AS MITTERRAND'S TALKS WITH HELMUT SCHMIDT AND OTHERS AT HELSINGOR MAY HAVE FURTHER FED THESE CONCERNS.

2. MITTERRAND, PONTILLON SAID, WAS THEREFORE INTERESTED IN HAVING US ASSURANCES THAT WE WOULD MAINTAIN OUR DEFENSE UMBRELLA OVER FRANCE IF THE PS-PC ALLIANCE CAME TO POWER. IN THIS CONNECTION, AND ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT HE MIGHT WELL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FRANCE'S SECURITY IN TWO YEARS,

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MITTERRAND ALSO WANTED TO CHANNEL A GREATER PART OF

HIS NORMAL CONTACTS WITH THE EMBASSY TO DEFENSE
QUESTIONS. THUS, PONTILLON SAID, MITTERRAND NOW
PARTICULARLY WANTS TO DISCUSS THE STATE OF EUROPE'S
CONVENTIONAL, TACTICAL-NUCLEAR AND STRATEGIC DETERRENCE
AND DEFENSE CAPACITY; THE STRATEGIC BALANCE; AND THE
IMPLICATIONS OF THE SECRETARY'S MOSCOW SALT
DISCUSSIONS FOR EUROPE.

3. COMMENT: MITTERRAND'S REACTION SUGGESTS THAT RECENT
US EFFORTS TO WARN HIM AGAINST THE POTENTIALLY FAR-
REACHING EFFECTS OF A PS-PC VICTORY FOR THE ALLIANCE
HAVE HIT THE MARK, AT LEAST PRIVATELY; ALTHOUGH MITTER-
RAND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN HIS CURRENT
PUBLIC STANCE. IN OUR OWN CONTINUING CONTACTS WE WILL
SUSTAIN THIS ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY, WITHOUT REFUSING
GENERAL DISCUSSIONS OF QUESTIONS HE RAISES. THIS
COURSE WILL SUSTAIN HIS MOTIVATION FOR MAINTAINING
COMMUNICATIONS
RUSH

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, COLLECTIVE SECURITY, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS03254
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760040-0890
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760287/aaaacyzh.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 3805, 76 PARIS 1447, 76 PARIS 1867
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MITTERRAND CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE US SECURITY COMMITMENT
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PINT, FR, US, (MITTERRAND, FRANCOIS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006